

## REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

RFA # 001

TITLE: First Commitment Waiver Expansion

FUNDING AGENCY: DMHDDSAS

ISSUE DATE: May 12, 2008

FUNDING AGENCY: *Division of Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services*  
*3015 Mail Service Center*  
*Raleigh, N.C. 27699*

### IMPORTANT NOTE:

Applications, subject to the conditions made a part of hereof, will be received until 5:00 p.m., May 30 2008, for furnishing services described herein.

SEND ALL APPLICATIONS DIRECTLY TO THE FUNDING AGENCY ADDRESS SHOWN ABOVE.

Direct all inquiries concerning this RFA to: *Mark J. O'Donnell*  
*Division of Mental Health/Developmental*  
*Disabilities/ Substance Abuse Services*  
*3015 Mail Service Center*  
*Raleigh, N.C. 27699*  
*(919) 218-7832*  
*(919) 508-0976*

NOTE: Questions concerning the specifications in this Request for Applications will be received until May 27, 2008. A summary of all questions and answers will be mailed to all agencies and organizations sent a copy of this Request for Applications.

### INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

In June 2003, the North Carolina legislature passed Session law 2003-178, House Bill 883 directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop a pilot program allowing up to five initial Local Management Entities to waive the current general statutes pertaining to the first level examinations for involuntary commitments performed by physicians and eligible psychologists. Five Local Management Entities (CenterPoint, Crossroads, Pathways, Piedmont and Smoky Mountain Center) were selected by the Secretary, and the pilot was conducted from 2003 to 2006 under the aegis of an advisory body that included representatives from the North Carolina Psychiatric Association, North Carolina Psychological Association, National Association of Social Workers, North Carolina Council of Community programs, North Carolina Medical Society, North Carolina Nurses Association and other interested entities.

The results of the pilot study were inconclusive due to a low sample yield and inherent biases built into the implementation of the evaluation.

- The results of the stage 1 evaluation from 2006 showed 162 consumers from the five pilot sites were evaluated by both Masters and Doctoral level examiners.
- There was 97.5% agreement between Masters-and Doctoral-Level staff in their recommendations from Preliminary Examinations of 162 patients
- 69 patients of the 162 patients were recommended by both Masters-and Doctoral-Level for Inpatient commitment.
- Depending on the type of commitment, 81%-93% of their recommendations were confirmed by second examinations of the patients.
- 89 patients were recommended for release since they did not meet the commitment criteria.

In 2007, the legislature requested that the Division continue the evaluation into another phase allowing up to five additional LMEs to be waived as participants in an effort to obtain more conclusive results, given the low sample sizes within each site of study and the lack of generalizability of the results across the state.

A review of mental health and substance abuse professionals across the state of North Carolina in 2006 showed that there are 30 counties across the state where there are no registered psychiatrists and 25 counties that do not have a psychologist. All but 4 counties in the state had one or more LCSWs. The statewide average number of persons in need per psychiatrist was 572. This noted, there continued to be a need to develop strategies for workforce development to meet the needs of consumers across the state. Under current law, with the exception of those LMEs waived in the first phase of the First Commitment Waiver, First Level commitment evaluations are done by psychiatrists and eligible psychologists. It is expected that building the competence among master's level Psychiatric Nurses and Licensed Clinical Social workers and Licensed Clinical Addiction Specialists, with necessary safeguards built in, will ease the burden on the system and reduce the time taken for this process to happen.

## SCOPE OF SERVICES

The Division of MH/DD/SAS is requesting responses from Local Management Entities [and affiliated Provider Agencies] to participate in the second phase of the First Commitment Evaluation Study as requested by the General Assembly. The evaluation is being undertaken to determine whether comparable competency can be developed in masters qualified professionals to evaluate a consumer for first level commitment through training using a prescribed curriculum and whether the immediate outcome recommended (commitment vs. release) will be the same between the groups of professionals given the same information.

Participating sites will be required to identify Master's level providers (*master's level Psychiatric Nurses and Licensed Clinical Social Workers and Licensed Clinical Addiction Specialists*) to be trained and tested on First Commitment criteria and the associated evaluation. The trained personnel will be required to participate in a three-day training and pass competency testing at an 80% level. The trained staff will be required to staff the study site over the 6 month period from August 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009 and evaluate all First Commitment consumers brought to that

site for evaluation. The information on the consumers being evaluated will be collected on the specific instrument provided by the Division. Each of the participating sites will be required to conduct First Commitment evaluations on a minimum of 75 consumers during the course of the 6 month period of study. The information will need to be complete and will be provided to external reviewers as identified by the Division. A staff member must be assigned to be the site liaison for the project. This person will provide the Division with monthly project updates and also be responsible in providing any additional information as requested by the Division, as well as coordinating with the Division regular contacts with the trained Master's level professionals doing the First Commitment waivers.

In order to increase the generalizability of the study results, the Division is seeking sites from different parts of the region with varying capacities for crises services, with access to state facilities and with a distinct demography of consumers being served. In responding to the RFA, please address and describe your sites strengths and weaknesses with regard to the following factors.

- a) Region of the state served
- b) Site structure and staffing
- c) Demography of consumers served
- d) Volume of First Commitment examinations conducted at the site
- e) Access to a state hospital
- f) Local crisis management capacity
- g) Current relationship with magistrates, law enforcement, CIT programs (not a requirement)
- h) How the LME/provider might provide/conduct physical health assessments by qualified professionals for consumers involved in First Commitment process (not a requirement)

Responses will be scored for completeness and adequacy of information on the topics listed above by a group of Division staff and advisory group members. There will be some incentive funding made available to each of the selected LMEs/Providers to be used as the LME believes will best allow it to meet the commitments made via this RFA.

### **The Procurement Process**

The following is a general description of the process by which an agency or organization will be selected to complete the goal or objective.

1. RFAs are being sent to prospective agencies and organizations.

1. Written questions concerning the RFA specifications will be received until the date specified on the cover sheet of this RFA. A summary of all questions and answers will be mailed to all agencies and organizations sent a copy of the RFA.

2. Applications in one original and *(at least two)* copies will be received from each agency or organization. The original must be signed and dated by an official authorized to bind the agency or organization **and** any subcontractor necessary for the completion of the task.
3. All applications must be received by the funding agency not later than the date and time specified on the cover sheet of the RFA. Faxed applications will not be accepted.
4. At that date and time the applications from each responding agency and organization will be logged in.
5. At their option, the evaluators may request additional information from any or all applicants for the purpose of clarification or to amplify the materials presented in any part of the application. However, agencies and organizations are cautioned that the evaluators are not required to request clarification: therefore, all applications should be complete and reflect the most favorable terms available from the agency or organization.
6. Applications will be evaluated according to completeness, content, experience with similar projects, ability of the agency's or organization's staff, cost, etc. The award of a grant to one agency and organization does not mean that the other applications lacked merit, but that, all facts considered, the selected application was deemed to provide the best service to the State.
7. Agencies and organizations are cautioned that this is a request for applications, and the funding agency reserves the unqualified right to reject any and all applications when such rejections are deemed to be in the best interest of the funding agency.

### **General Information on Submitting Applications**

#### **1. Award or Rejection**

All qualified applications will be evaluated and award made to that agency or organization whose combination of service capabilities is deemed to be in the best interest of the funding agency. The funding agency reserves the unqualified right to reject any or all offers if determined to be in its best interest. Successful applicants will be notified by June 13, 2008.

#### **2. Decline to Offer**

Any agency or organization that receives a copy of the RFA but declines to make an offer is requested to send a written "Decline to Offer" to the funding agency. Failure to respond as requested may subject the agency or organization to removal from consideration of future RFAs.

#### **3. Cost of Application Preparation**

Any cost incurred by an agency or organization in preparing or submitting an application is the agency's or organization's sole responsibility; the funding agency will not reimburse any agency or organization for any pre-award costs incurred.

#### 4. Elaborate Applications

Elaborate applications in the form of brochures or other presentations beyond that necessary to present a complete and effective application may be submitted, if relevant to the subject.

#### 5. Oral Explanations

The funding agency will not be bound by oral explanations or instructions given at any time during the competitive process or after awarding the grant.

#### 6. Reference to Other Data.

Only information that is received in response to this RFA will be evaluated; reference to information previously submitted will not suffice.

#### 7. Titles

Titles and headings in this RFA and any subsequent RFA are for convenience only and shall have no binding force or effect.

#### 8. Form of Application

Each application must be submitted on the form provided by the funding agency, and will be incorporated into the funding agency's Performance Agreement (contract).

#### 9. Exceptions

All applications are subject to the terms and conditions outlined herein. All responses will be controlled by such terms and conditions. The attachment of other terms and condition by any agency and organization may be grounds for rejection of that agency or organization's application. Funded agencies and organizations specifically agree to the conditions set forth in the Performance Agreement (contract).

#### 10. Advertising

In submitting its application, agencies and organizations agrees not to use the results therefrom or as part of any news release or commercial advertising without prior written approval of the funding agency.

#### 11. Right to Submitted Material

All responses, inquiries, or correspondence relating to or in reference to the RFA, and all other reports, charts, displays, schedules, exhibits, and other documentation submitted by the agency or organization will become the property of the funding agency when received.

## 12. Competitive Offer

Pursuant to the provision of G.S. 143-54, and under penalty of perjury, the signer of any application submitted in response to this RFA thereby certifies that this application has not been arrived at collusively or otherwise in violation of either Federal or North Carolina antitrust laws.

## 13. Agency and Organization's Representative

Each agency or organization shall submit with its application the name, address, and telephone number of the person(s) with authority to bind the agency or organization as well as a contact person to whom the funding agency would be able to communicate with on an as needed basis and answer questions or provide clarification concerning the application.

## 14. Subcontracting

Agencies and organizations may propose to subcontract portions of work provided that their applications clearly indicate the scope of the work to be subcontracted, and to whom. All information required about the prime grantee is also required for each proposed subcontractor. The prime grantee will include in its MOA with the subcontractor a requirement that the obligations responded to in this RFA will be met.

## 15. Proprietary Information

Trade secrets or similar proprietary data which the agency or organization does not wish disclosed to other than personnel involved in the evaluation will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by NCAC TO1: 05B.1501 and G.S. 132-1.3 if identified as follows: Each page shall be identified in boldface at the top and bottom as "CONFIDENTIAL." Any section of the application that is to remain confidential shall also be so marked in boldface on the title page of that section.

## 16. Participation Encouraged

Pursuant to Article 3 and 3C, Chapter 143 of the North Carolina General Statutes and Executive Order No. 77, the funding agency invites and encourages participation in this RFA by businesses owned by minorities, women and the disabled including utilization as subcontractor(s) to perform functions under this Request for Applications.

## 17. Contract

The Division will allocate funding to the recipient of the grant that will include their application. Expenditures can begin immediately up receipt of a completely signed agreement and allocation.

Please be advised that successful applicants may be required to have an audit in accordance with G. S. 143-6.2 as applicable to the agency or organization's status. Also, the contract may include assurances the successful applicant would be required to execute when signing the contract.

Assemble the Application in the following order. Use a binder clip at top left corner on each copy of the application. Number each page consecutively beginning with the Application Face Sheet.

#### Application Face Sheet

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\*  
\*

Verification of IRS status, if applicable to the status of the agency/organization.

#### Attachments

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\*  
\*

\* Other examples might include statement of need, program plan, program narrative, program timeline, etc. Complete as required per RFA.

#### **Proposed Time Line:**

April 30- May 30	Issue of RFA
June 1- June 15	Selection of study participants
June 15- June 30	Training of providers
June 30 to August 1	Full rollout within each Pilot site
August 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009	Data gathering
March 1 to June 30, 2009	Data analysis
June to September 2009	Final report to Legislature

## APPLICATION FACE SHEET

Name of Agency (official name): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Include physical address if different from mailing address)

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency Status: ( ) Public ( ) Private , Non-Profit ( ) Private, For Profit

Agency Federal Tax ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency's Financial Reporting Year (IRS Audit Cycle) \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Title of Contract Administrator: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Program (s): \_\_\_\_\_

SERVICE DELIVERY SITE(S):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

AREA TO BE SERVED: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Vice) President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## ATTACHMENT A

### Summary of RFA Requirements/Points of Response

#### Evaluation Questions:

- Can comparable competency be developed in masters qualified professionals to evaluate a consumer for first level commitment through training using a prescribed curriculum?
- Will the immediate recommendation made be the same between the two professional groups given the same set of information.
- **Outcome of interest:** Recommendation (commit vs. release) made on consumer being evaluated.

#### Evaluation Design:

- Consumer brought in for First Commitment evaluation-
  - Evaluated by a masters level professional utilizing the prescribed assessment form and a recommendation is made.
  - The prescribed forms are then copied and given to two independent doctoral level professionals (at the site and a representative of the NCPA) who all independently review the assessment forms and make a recommendation on the desired immediate outcome.
  - Blinded on who did first assessment and recommendation
  - Recommendation from the three groups are analyzed by the state to determine level of consensus.
- A. Selection of agency:
  - 3-5 LMEs to be selected based on response to RFA
  - Interest in selecting three models in terms of
    - Region of the state
    - Consumer demography
    - Volume of First Commitment evaluations conducted at the site
    - Site staffing and structure
    - Access to a state hospital
    - Local crisis management capacity
  - Rationale- three models gives more opportunity for generalizability and identifying an optimum model for the issue at hand.
- Participating sites must commit to
  - Training and qualifying (submit to competence testing) adequate numbers of personnel necessary to staff the site 24/7 for the 6 month period of study.
  - Respond to the Division on a site assessment tool
  - Assigning a point of contact for the Division staff during the period of study and a specified period of time after
  - Commit to having all consumers brought in for review to be evaluated by a trained masters level professional
  - Commit to using the data forms provided and submit the data request.
  - Required to document whether there has been a determination of need for medical assessment.

- Assign a doctoral level person within the site to review the data forms and make an independent recommendation on the consumer
- Selected sites will be asked to respond to the following questions as well: -
- Involvement of local law enforcement involvement and relationship on site/CIT involvement
- Conduct physical health assessment by qualified professionals for consumers involved in First Commitment process

Exclusion Criteria:

Any consumer who is deemed to be medically vulnerable and need medical attention